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SUBJECT: PLANNED PROTEST LACKS ORGANIZED SUPPORT

REF: CONAKRY 0080

¶1. (SBU) Guineans throughout the capital continue to discuss the possibility of a large, public march on April 10 to protest rising prices (reftel). However, while people generally support the underlying principles for the protest, there is little organizational support. The President of the Organization for Consumer Protection (OPC), which initially planned the event, told Pol LES on April 9 that the Guinean Government had not granted permission for the march. As a result, the OPC is reportedly planning to hold a press conference at 16:00 to officially call off the demonstration.

According to the organization's president, they will cite the lack of government permission and stress that they do not want to risk putting people in harm's way.

¶2. (SBU) Representatives from various youth associations, the unions, and civil society organizations told Embassy staff that their organizations do not plan on participating in the protest if it goes forward as planned. One youth representative said his organization had not been consulted and was not part of the planning.

¶3. (SBU) On April 8, the African Group for the Defense of Human Rights (RADDHO), which is a Senegal-based NGO with an office in Guinea, acknowledged OPC's plan to demonstrate. They emphasized that freedom of speech and the right to demonstrate are rights guaranteed by the Guinean constitution. However, RADDHO expressed concern about the potential for human rights abuses and violence and called on the international community to intervene in order to avoid a "new blood bath." RADDHO's resident representative, Mamady Kaba, told Pol LES on April 9 that he had been out of the country and only returned three days ago. He said that he plans to visit the OPC's executive bureau members tomorrow in order to "express moral support," but will not be joining any demonstration. Kaba reportedly said that given his absence, he did not have any time to mobilize broader support from within his organization.

¶4. (SBU) The Russian DCM, who was visibly concerned about the possibility of a demonstration, met with our DCM on April 9 to discuss the situation and Embassy perceptions of possible activity. Other diplomats in the international community who were participating in a working group meeting on elections, which Poloff attended, also expressed concern about the growing potential for violence. They did not necessarily think that the demonstration would go forward as planned tomorrow, but did appear to see Guinea's overall political situation as increasingly volatile.

COMMENT

15. (SBU) At this point, there is no indication that a demonstration or protest will develop tomorrow, as envisioned by the event's organizers. However, it is possible that unorganized elements and/or individual citizens could gather together in a more spontaneous fashion, regardless of whether they hear the cancellation announcement or not. END COMMENT.

CARTER